

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-03 CIAE-00
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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 /083 W
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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1599

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 2354

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PBOR, IS, JO, XF

SUBJ: MAYOR SHAKA'A'S VIEWS ON THE PEACE PROCESS

1. NABLUS' MAYOR BASSAM SHAKA'A, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM AN EXTENDED VISIT TO AMMAN AND SYRIA, MET WITH CONGEN AND POLOFF HULL AT THE MUNICIPALITY AUGUST 23 FOR A FRANK BUT PLEASANT EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE PEACE PROCESS, PARTICULARLY THE UPCOMING SUMMIT AT CAMP DAVID.

2. SHAKA'A NOTED THAT WHILE HE WAS IN SYRIA, PRESIDENT ASSAD ISSUED A STATEMENT CRITICAL OF THE SUMMIT AND THAT HIS (SHAKA'A'S) INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS IN JORDAY REVEALED NO GREAT EXPECTATIONS AMONG ARABS THERE. LIKEWISE, THE MAYOR SAID HE EXPECTED NO POSITIVE RESULTS ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES ALTHOUGH, HEACKNOWLEDGED, IMPORTAND DEVELOPMENTS TOUCHING UPON THE PALESTININAS' FATE MIGHT OCCUR.

3. NO POSITIVE RESULTS WERE LIKELY BECAUSE NONE OF THE
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PARTIES WAS SEEKING A FUNDAMENTAL SOLUTION, THE MAYOR SAID. THE EGYPTIANS WANTED TO RESCUE THE SADAT INITIATIVE AND MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES. THE ISRAELIS WANTED TO LEGITIMEZE THE OCCUPATION. THE AMERICANS WANTED TO MAINTAIN THE PREVAILING EQUILIBRIUM IN THE REGION. ALTHOUGH HE FELT SADAT'S INITIATIVE WAS MISCONCEIVED, AT LEAST INITIALLY SADAT'S ADHERENCE TO

PRINCIPLES WAS CLEAR, E.E. PALESTINIANS RIGHTS, WITHDRAWAL AND SELF-DETERMINATION. GRADUALLY, HOWEVER, SADAT HAD LOST CONTROL, AND THE FOCUS HAD SHIFTED TO A SEPARATE DEAL FOR EGYPT IN THE SINAI WITH ILL-DEFINED "MEASURES" OF AUTONOMY FOR THE WEST BANK. THE PLO, HE NOTED, HAD CEASED (SIC) TO BE MENTIONED AT ALL. FROM A PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVE, THE MAYOR SAID, THE INITIATIVE HAD APROVED FRUITLESS. MONTHS AFTER (SADAT'S VISIT) THE OCCUPATION CONTINUED AND PRISONS WERE FULL OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALISTS.

4. THE CONGEN DISPUTED THE MAYOR'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE U.S. POLICY. WE WERE CONVINCED, HE SAID, THAT A NO PEACH/NO WAR SITUATION COULD NOT ENDURE INDEFINITELY AND WE WERE SERIOUS IN GRAPPLING WITH THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. SADAT HAD REFUSED A SEPARATE DEAL AND WE WERE NOT TALKING ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES: WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION. WE HOPED PROGRESS TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE COULD BE ACHIEVED AT CAMP DAVID BUT THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN SOME AMBIGUITY. IF AGREEMENT WERE REACHED AT CAMP DAVID, HE HOPED PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT RUSH TO JUDGEMENT AND WOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY POSITIVE ELEMENTS BEFORE REACTING. CONGEN ALSO HOPED PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT SIMPLY COMPARE CAMP DAVID RESULTS WITH PREVIOUS POSITIONS ADOPTED BY PALESTINIANS AND THER-BY BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH CERTAINASPECTS THEY MIGHT CONSIDER TO BE LESS THAN IDEAL.
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5. SHAKA'A REPLIED PALESTINIANS WERE NOT BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE, BUT TO ACCEPT WHAT OTHERS WERE DECIDING. IT WAS AS IF PALESTINIANS WERE WATCHING A PLAY, THE ACTORS OF WHICH WERE DECIDING THE PALESTINIANS' FATE. NEVERTHE-LESS, HE SAID HE FEARED THAT EVEN A RELATIVE GAIN MIGHT ENGENDER AMONG PALESTINIANS A BITTER AND DIVISIVE DEBATE, THE OUTCOME OF WHICH WAS NOT KNOWN.

7. COMMENT: FAILING IRON-CLAD GUARANTEES OF COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL AND UNFETTERED SELF-DETERMINATION, SHAKA'A WILL PROBABLY OPPOSE ANY PARTICIPATION BY WEST BANK PALESTINAINS IN THE PEACE PROCESS. IN HIM, THE PLO WILL HAVE AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPOKESMAN AS THE ELECTED MAYOR OF THE WEST BNAK'S LARGEST CITY. HOWEVER, HIS VIEWS WILL NOT BE DECISIVE OUT-SIDE NABLUS AND, PERHAPS, NOT EVEN IN NABLUS ITSELF IT ALTERNATIVE VOICES SUCH AS THE AL MASRIS' ARE RAISED.
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